

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6, which has been canceled.

Entry of the above amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by WO 99/01208 (US equivalent to Hirose (US 6,723,422)).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons of record. In addition, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6, which has not been included in the rejection. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Hirose does not disclose a process for producing a composite semipermeable membrane which comprises forming on a surface of a porous supporting film a thin film comprising a polyamide resin obtained by reacting a polyfunctional amine ingredient with a polyfunctional acid ingredient in the presence of at least an alkali metal hydroxide and an organic acid, wherein the polyfunctional amine ingredient is aromatic or aliphatic, wherein the ratio of the normality of the alkali metal hydroxide to that of the organic acid to be mixed therewith (alkali metal hydroxide/organic acid) is from 1.2/1 to 0.9/1, as recited in claim 1.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom are patentable over Hirose, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In addition, claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Tomaschke (US 6,464,873).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons of record. In addition, the Examiner asserts that TEASCA would completely react with water to form hydronium ion (the

organic acidic entity in water), and therefore, both an organic acid and sodium hydroxide present in Example 1. *See* col. 7, lines 35-45. However, one of ordinary skill in the art would not consider hydronium ions to be "an organic acid" as recited in claim 1. An organic compound (acid) is a compound that contains molecules of carbon and since a hydronium ion does not contain carbon, it is not an organic acid. Since TEACSA should be presented as a salt in the aqueous solution, a hydronium ion is not an organic acid, which is an acid of organic compounds containing carbon atoms.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom are patentable over Tomaschke, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-5 and 7 is respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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